A BRIEF CHARACTER OF THE LOW COUNTRIES UNDER THE STATES.

With

Some Obſervations on the Virtues and Vices of the Inhabitants.

Part the Second.

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The SECOND PART.

Solomon *tells of Four Things that are ſmall and full of Wiſdom, the* Piſmire, *the* Graſshopper, *the* Coney, *and the* Spider.

FOR Providence they are Piſmires of the world, and having nothing but what graſs affords them, are yet, for almoſt all proviſions, the Store-houſe of whole Chriſtendom. What is it which there may not be found in plenty? they

making by their induſtry all the fruits of the vaſt Earth their own. What Land can boaſt a priviledge that they do not partake it? They have not of their own enough materials to compile one ſhip, yet how many Nations do they furniſh? The remoter angles of the world do by their pains deliver them their ſweets; and being of themſelves in want, their diligence hath made them both Indies nearer home.

They are frugal to the ſaving of Egge-ſhells, and maintain it for a Maxim, that a thing laſts longer mended than new.

Their Cities are their Mole-hills; their Schutes and Fly-boats creep and return with their ſtore for Winter. Every one is buſie, and carries his grain; as if every City were a ſeveral Hive, and the Bees not permitting a Drone to inhabit; for idle perſons muſt find ſome other manſion. And leſt neceſſity bereave men of means to ſet them on work, there are publick Banks, that (without uſe) lend upon pawns to all the poor that want.

There is a reaſon when the Piſmires fly; and ſo each Summer they likewiſe ſwarm abroad with their Armies.

The Ant, ſays one, is a wiſe creature, but a ſhrewd thing in a Garden or Orchard. And truly ſo are they; for they look upon others too little, and upon themſelves too much: And whereſoever they light in a pleaſant or rich ſoyl, like ſuckers and lower plants, they rob from the root of that Tree which gives them ſhade and protection; ſo their wiſdom is not indeed Heroick or Numinal, as courting an uuiverſal good, but rather narrow and reſtrictive, as being a wiſdom but for themſelves. Which, to ſpeak plainly, is deſcending into Craft; and is but the ſiniſter part of that which is really Noble and Cœleſtial.

Nay in all they hold ſo true a proportion with the Emmet, as you ſhall not find they want ſo much as the ſting.

For dwelling in Rocks they are Conies. And while the Spaniſh tumbler plaies a-

bout them, they reſt ſecure in their own inacceſſible Buries. Where have you under Heaven, ſuch impregnable Fortifications? Where Art beautifies Nature, and Nature makes Art invincible; Herein indeed they differ; the Conies find Rocks, and they make them. And as they would invert the miracle of Moſes, They raiſe them in the boſom of the waves: where within theſe twenty years, ſhips furrowed in the pathleſs Ocean, the peaceful plough now unbowels the fertile earth, which at night is carryed home to the faireſt Manſions in Holland.

Every Town hath his Garriſon; and the keys of the Gates in the night time are not truſted but in the State-houſe, From theſe holds they bolt abroad for proviſions, and then return to their faſtneſſes repleniſhed.

For war they are Graſs-hoppers, and without a King, go forth in bands to conquer Kings. They have not only defended themſelves at their own home, but have braved the Spaniard at his. In

Anno 1599. under the command of Vander Does, was the Grand Canary taken. The chief City ſackt, the King of Spain's Enſigns taken down, and the colours of his Excellency ſet up in their room. In the year 1600 the battle of Newport was a gallant piece, when with the loſs of a thouſand or little more, they ſlew 7000 of their enemies, took above 100 Enſigns, the Admiral of Arragon a priſoner. The very furniture of the Arch-Duke's own Chamber, and Cabinet, yea the ſignet that belonged to his hand.

In 1607. they aſſailed the Armado of Spain in the Bay of Gibraltar, under covert of the Caſtle and Town's Ordnance, and with the loſſe of 150, ſlew above 2000, and ruined the whole Fleet. Certainly a bolder attempt hath ever ſcarce been done. The Indian Maſtiff never was more fierce againſt the angry Lion. Nor can the Cock in his crowing valour, become more prodigal of his bloud than they.

There hardly is upon earth ſuch a ſchool of Martial Diſcipline. 'Tis the Chriſtian world's Academy for Arms; whither all the neighbour-Nations reſort to be inſtructed; where they may obſerve how unreſiſtable a blow many ſmall grains of powder will make, being heaped together, which yet if you ſeparate, can do nothing but ſparkle and die.

Their recreation is the practice of Arms; And they learn to be ſouldiers ſooner than men. Nay, as if they placed a Religion in Arms, every Sunday is concluded with the Train'd-Bands marching through their Cities.

For induſtry, they are Spiders, and are in the Palaces of Kings. Of old they were the guard of the perſon of the Roman Emperor; And by the Romans themſelves declared to be their friends and companions. There is none have the like intelligence: Their Merchants are at this day the greateſt of the Univerſe. What Nations is it where they have not inſinuated? Nay, which they have not almoſt anato-

mized, and even diſcovered the very intrinſick veins on't?

Even among us, they ſhame us with their induſtry, which makes them ſeem as if they had a faculty from the world's Creation, out of water to make dry land appear. They win our drowned grounds which we cannot recover, and chaſe back Neptune to his own old Banks.

All that they do is by ſuch labour as it ſeems extracted out of their own bowels. And in their wary thrift, they hang by ſuch a ſlender ſuſtentation of life, that one would think tdeir weight ſhould be enough to crack it.

Want of idleneſs keeps them from want. And 'tis their Diligence makes them Rich.

A fruitful Soil encreaſeth the Harveſt; A plentiful Sun augmenteth the Store; and ſeaſonable ſhowers drop fatneſs on the Crop we reap: But no Rain fructifies more than the dew of Sweat.

You would think being with them you were in old Iſrael, for you find not a beggar among them. Nor are they mindful of their own alone; but ſtrangers alſo partake of their Care and Bounty. If they will depart, they have money for their Convoy. If they ſtay, they have work provided. If unable, they find an Hoſpital. Their Providence extends even from the Prince to the catching of flies. And leſt you looſe an afternoon by fruitleſs mourning, by two of the clock all Burials muſt end. Wherein to prevent the waſt of ground, they pile Coffin upon Coffin till the Sepulchre be full.

In their Manufactures they hold truth and conſtancy: for they are as fruits from Trees, the ſame every year that they are at firſt. Not Apples one year and Crabs the next: and ſo for ever after. In the ſale of theſe they alſo are at a word, they will gain rather than exact, and have not that way whereby our Citizens abuſe the wiſe, and cozen the ignorant; and by their infinite over-aſking for commodities, proclaim to the world that they would cheat all if it were in their power.

The Deprivation of Manners they puniſh with Contempt, but the defects of nature they favour with Charity. Even their Bedlam is a place ſo curious, that a Lord might live in it; Their Hoſpital might lodge a Lady: So that ſafely you may conclude, amongſt them even Poverty and Madneſs do both inhabit handſomely. And though Vice makes every thing turn ſordid, yet the State will have the very correction of it to be neat, as if they would ſhew that though obedience fail, yet Government muſt be ſtill itſelf, and decent. To prove this, they that do but view their Bridewel will think it may receive a Gentleman though a Gallant. And ſo their priſon a wealthy Citizen. But for a poor man it is his beſt policy to be laid there, for he that caſt him in muſt maintain him.

Their language, though it differ from the higher Germany, yet hath it the ſame ground, and is as old as Babel. And albeit harſh; yet ſo ſoftly and full a Tongue, as made Goropius Becanus maintain it for the ſpeech of Adam in his Paradiſe. And ſurely if there were not other

reaſons againſt it, the ſignificancy of the Antient Teutonick might carry it from the primeſt Dialect. Steven of Bruges reckons up 2170 Monaſillables, which being compounded, how richly do they grace a Tongue? A Tongue that for the general profeſſion is extended further than any that I know. Through both the Germanies, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and ſometimes France, England, Spain. And ſtill among us all our old words are Dutch, with yet ſo little change, that certainly it is in a manner the ſame that it was 2000 years ago; without the too much mingled borrowings of their neighbour-Nations.

The Germans are a people that more than all the world I think may boaſt ſincerity, as being for ſome thouſand of years a pure and unmixed people. And ſurely I ſee not but their conduction by Tuiſco from the building of Babel, may paſs as unconfuted Story, they yet retaining the Appellation from his Name.

They are a large and numerous people, having ever kept their own, and tranſ-

ported Colonies into other Nations. In Italy were the Longobards; In Spain the Gothes and Vandals; In France the Franks or Franconians; In England the Saxons: having in all these left reverend Steps of their Antiquity and Language.

It is a noble Testimony that so grave an Historian as Tacitus hath left still extant of them, and written above 1500 years ago, They deliberate when they cannot dissemble: and resolve when they cannot err.

Two hundred and ten years he reckons the Romans were in conquering them. In which space on either side were the losses sad and fatal. So as neither the Samnites, the Carthaginians, the Spaniards, the Gaules, no nor the Parthians ever troubled them like the Germans. They slew or took prisoners several Commanders of the highest rank, as Carbo, Cassius, S. Caurus Aurelius, Cervilius Cepio, and M. Manlius. They defeated five Consulary Armies, and Varus with three Legions, yet after all this he concludes, They were rather Triumphed over than

conquered. To confirm this, the keeping of their own Language is an argument unanſwerable. The change whereof ever follows upon the fully vanquiſhed, as we may ſee it did in Italy, France, Spain, England.

And this he ſpeaks of the Nation in general: nor was the opinion of the Romans leſs worthy in particular concerning theſe lower Provinces, which made them for their valour and warlike minds, ſtyle them by the name of Gallia Belgica, and eſpecially of the Batavians, which were the Hollanders and part of the Guelders. You may hear in what honourable terms he mentions them, where ſpeaking of the ſeveral people of Germany he ſays, Of all theſe Nations the principal in valiant vertue are the Batavians: for neither are they become deſpicable by paying of Tribute, nor oppreſſed too much by the Farmer of publick Revenues, but free from Taxes and Contributions of ſervility, they are ſpecially ſet apart for the fight, as Armor and Weapons only reſerved for war.

All this, even at this day they ſeem to make good: For of all the world they are the people that thrive and grow rich by war, like the Porcpiſce, that plays in the ſtorm, but at other times keeps ſober under the water.

War, which is the world's ruin, and ravins upon the beauty of all, is to them proſperity and ditation. And ſurely the reaſon of this is their ſtrength in ſhipping, the open Sea, their many fortified Towns, and the Country, by reaſon of its lowneſs and Irriguation, becoming unpaſſable for an Army when the Winter but approaches. Otherwiſe it is hardly poſſible, that ſo ſmall a parcel of Mankind ſhould brave the moſt potent Monarch in Chriſtendom, who in his own hands holds the Mines of the war's ſinews, Money; and hath now got a command ſo wide, that out of his Dominions the Sun can neither riſe nor ſet.

The whole ſeventeen Provinces are not above a thouſand Engliſh miles in circuit, and in the States hands there is not ſeven of thoſe: yet have they in the field

ſometimes 60000 Souldiers, beſides thoſe which they always keep in Garriſon, which cannot be but a conſiderable number, near 30000 more. There being in the whole Countries above two hundred wall'd Towns and Cities; ſo that if they have people for the war, one would wonder where they ſhould get money to pay them, they being when they have an Army in the field, at a thouſand pound a day charge extraordinary.

To maintain this, their Exciſe is an unwaſted Mine, which with the infiniteneſs of their Traffique, and their untired induſtry, is by every part of the world in ſomething or other contributed to.

The Sea yields them but two ſorts of Fiſh only, Herrings and Cod, for which there go out ſometimes ſeven or eight hundred boats at once; and for greater ſhips, they are able to ſet out double the number.

Their Merchandize amounted in Guiciardine's time to fourteen Millions per Annum. Whereas England, which is

in compaſs almoſt as large again, and hath the Ocean as a Ring about her, made not above ſix Millions yearly: ſo ſedulous are theſe Bees to labour and enrich their Hive.

As they on the Sea, ſo the women are buſie on Land in weaving of Nets, and helping to add to the heap. And though a huſband's long abſence might tempt them to laſcivious ways: yet they hate adultery, and are reſolute in Matrimonial chaſtity. I do not remember that ever I read in Story, of any great Lady of that nation, that hath been tax'd with looſneſs. And queſtionleſs, 'tis their ever being buſie makes them not have leiſure for luſt.

Tis idleneſs that is Cupid's Nurſe; but buſineſs breaks his Bow, and makes his Arrows uſeleſs.

They are both Merchants and Farmers. And there act parts: which men can but diſcharge with us. As if they would ſhew that the Soul in all is mat-

culine, and not varied into weaker ſex, as are the bodies that they wear about them.

Whether this be from the nature of their Country, in which if they be not laborious they cannot live; or from an Innate Genius of the people by a Superiour Providence ad-apted to them of ſuch a ſituation; from their own inclination addicted to parſimony; from cuſtom in their way of breeding; from any Tranſcendency of active parts more than other Nations; or from being in their Country, like people in a City beſieged, whereby their own vertues do more compact and fortifie, I will not determine. But certainly in general they are the moſt painful and diligent people on earth: And of all other the moſt truly of Veſpaſian's opinion, to think, Be it raiſed from what it will, the ſmell of gain is pleaſant.

Yet they are in ſome ſort Gods, for they ſet bounds to the Sea, and when they liſt let it paſs them. Even their dwelling is a miracle; They live lower than the fiſhes in the very lap of the floods, and incircled in their watry Arms

They are the Iſraelites paſſing thro' the Red-Sea. The waters wall them in, and if they ſet open their ſluces ſhall drown up their enemies.

They have ſtrugled long with Spain's Pharaoh, and they have at length inforced him to let them go. They are a Gideon's Army upon the march again. They are the Indian Rat, gnawing the bowels of the Spaniſh Crocodile, to which they got when he gap'd to ſwallow them. They are a Serpent wreathed about the legs of that Elephant. They are the little ſword-fiſh pricking the belly of the Whale. They are the wane of that Empire, which increas'd in Iſabella, and in Charles the fifth was at full.

They are a glaſs wherein Kings may ſee, that though they be Soveraigns over lives and goods, yet when they uſurp upon God's part, and will be Kings over conſcience too, they are ſometimes puniſht with loſs of that which lawfully is their own. That Religion too fiercely urg'd, is to ſtretch a ſtring till it not only jars

but cracks, and in the breaking whips (perhaps) the ſtrainers eye out.

That an extreme Taxation is to take away the honey while the Bees keep the Hive; whereas he that would take that, ſhould firſt either burn them or drive them out. That Tyrants in their Government, are the greateſt Traitors to their own Eſtates. That a deſire of being too abſolute, is to walk upon Pinacles and the tops of Pyramides, where not only the footing is full of hazard, but even the ſharpneſs of that they tread on may run into their foot and wound them. That too much to regrate on he patience of but tickle Subjects, is to preſs a Thorn till it prick your finger. That nothing makes a more deſperate Rebel than a Prerogative inforced too far.

That liberty in man is as the ſkin to the body, not to be put off, but together with life. That they which will command more than they ought, ſhall not at laſt command ſo much as is fit.

That moderate Princes ſit faſter in their Regalities, than ſuch as being but men, would yet have their power over their Subjects, as the Gods, unlimited. That Oppreſſion is an Iron heat till it burns the hand. That to debar ſome States of Ancient Priviledges, is for a Falcon to undertake to beat a flock of wild Geeſe out of the Fens. That to go about to compel a ſullen reaſon to ſubmit to a wilful peremptorineſs, is ſo long to beat a chain'd Maſtiff into his Kennel, till at laſt he turns and flyes at your throat. That unjuſt policy is to ſhoot as they did at Oſtend, into the mouth of a charged Cannon, to have two Bullets returned for one. That he doth but endanger himſelf, that riding with too weak a bit provokes a headſtrong horſe with a ſpur. That 'tis ſafer to meet a valiant man weaponleſs, than almoſt a Coward in Armour. That even a weak cauſe with a ſtrong Caſtle, will boyl ſalt bloud to a rebellious Itch. That 'tis better keeping a craſie body in an equal temper, than to anger humours by too ſharp a Phyſick.

That admonitions from a dying man are too ſerious to be neglected. That there is nothing certain that is not impoſſible. That a Cobler of Vluſhing was one of the greateſt enemies that the King of Spain ever had.

To conclude, the Country it ſelf is a moted Caſtle, keeping a Garniſh of the richeſt Jewels of the world in't, the Queen of Bohemia and her Princely Children.

The people in it are Jews of the New Teſtament, that have exchanged nothing but the Law for the Goſpel; and this they rather profeſs than practiſe. Together, a man of war riding at Anchor in the Downs of Germany.

For forreign Princes to help them, is wiſe ſelf-policy: when rhey have made them able to defend themſelves againſt Spain, they are at the Pale; if they enable them to offend others, they go beyond it. For queſtionleſs, were this thorn out of the Spaniard's ſide, he might be

feared too ſoon to graſp his loug intended Monarchy. And were the Spaniard but poſſeſſed Lord of the Low-Countries, or had the States but the wealth and power of Spain, the reſt of Europe might be like people at Sea in a ſhip on fire; that could ouly chuſe whether they would drown or burn. Now, their war is the peace of their Neighbours: So Rome when buſied in her civil broils, the Parthians lived at reſt; but thoſe concluded once by Cæſar, next are they deſign'd for conqueſt.

If any man wonder at theſe Contraries, let him look in his own Body for ſo many ſeveral humours, in his own Brain for as many different fancies, in his own Heart for as various paſſions; and from all theſe he may learn, That

There is not in all the World ſuch another Beaſt as Man.

FINIS.

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